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Vesuvius, A.D. 79: The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum

Ernesto De Carolis, Giovanni Patricelli

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Vesuvius, A.D. 79: The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum Ernesto De Carolis, Giovanni Patricelli Mount Vesuvius, in what is now southern Italy, erupted in AD 79, spewing volcanic rock, clouds of fine ash, and deadly gases over surrounding towns and farms, burying every trace of their existence. In nearby Pompeii, nearly 2000 people died. Rain falling with the ash formed a kind of cement that encased everything and everyone in an airtight seal. This is an account of the seismic and volcanic activity leading up to the eruption of Vesuvius, as well as a detailed description of the event itself and its aftermath. The authors rely on a wide range of scientific, artistic and literary sources, including the gripping eyewitness account of Pliny the Younger, whose eminent uncle died from exposure to toxic gases while trying to help victims evacuate. The authors close with stories and legends of this ancient catastrophe, which continues to fascinate scholars and non-experts to this day.

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